

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the School Breakfast Program School Year 2021-22 (July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022)

This guidance helps menu planners meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal pattern requirements for grades K-12, and encourage student selections of reimbursable meals with offer versus serve (OVS). The SBP meal patterns are available on the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Meal pattern: All breakfast menus must meet minimum daily and weekly requirements. The minimum daily requirements for all grades include 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the grains component, 1 cup of the fruits component, and 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored). The weekly maximum for the grains component is not required, but provides a planning tool to offer balanced meals that meet the weekly dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and refer to the CSDE's resource, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).



Milk: Allowable types of milk include unflavored low-fat (1%) milk and unflavored or flavored fat-free milk. Flavored low-fat milk is allowed through December 3, 2021. School food authorities (SFAs) must offer at least 1 cup daily for all grades and must include a variety (at least two different choices) of milk. At least one choice must be unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk. The milk variety requirement also applies to breakfast in the classroom and fruit/vegetable smoothies made with milk. For information on crediting smoothies, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).



Fruits: The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, and dried fruit; canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup; and pasteurized 100 percent full-strength fruit juice. All fruits credit based on volume except dried fruits, which credit as twice the volume served. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins or dried apricots credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. A serving of canned fruit may include the juice in which it is packed. For more information, visit the "Fruits Component for Grades K-12" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Vegetable substitutions: SFAs may substitute vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried) for the fruits component at any breakfast. All vegetables credit based on volume except raw leafy greens (such as spinach and lettuce), which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of lettuce credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables component. The meal pattern serving size refers to the amount of vegetables without added liquid, such as the water in canned corn or the sauce in baked beans. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP](#).

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Juice: Fruit and vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Fruit juice together with vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings at breakfast. The juice limit applies all sources of 100 percent juice served at breakfast during the week, including 100 percent juice, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies, and juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice (unless the canned fruit is drained). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).



Grains: SFAs must offer at least 1 oz eq daily for grades K-12. Over the week, five-day menus must include at least 7 oz eq for grades K-5, at least 8 oz eq for 6-8, and at least 9 oz eq for grades 9-12. Seven-day menus must include at least 10 oz eq for K-5, at least 11 oz eq for 6-8, and at least 12.5 oz eq for grades 9-12. All grains must be WGR. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any remaining grains are enriched, and any noncreditable grains are less than 2 percent ($\frac{1}{4}$ ounce equivalent) of the product formula. WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains, which are the most nutritious choices. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the "Grains Component for Grades K-12" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Meat/meat alternate substitutions: SFAs may offer meat/meat alternates as a substitute for the grains component if the daily breakfast menu also includes at least 1 oz eq of the grains component. A 1-oz eq serving equals 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended); 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese (low-fat recommended); $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes); $\frac{1}{2}$ large egg; 2 tablespoons of nut butters; 1 ounce of nuts or seeds; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein; 1 ounce of tempeh; 3 ounces of surimi; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and 1 ounce of alternate protein product (APP). Meat/meat alternates must be served in a main dish, or a main dish and only one other food item. For more information on the meat/meat alternates component, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP](#), [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP](#), and [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP](#); and visit the "Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Dietary specifications: Breakfast menus must meet the weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, and sodium indicated in the SBP meal pattern. In addition, the nutrition label or manufacturer specifications for all foods and ingredients used in school meals must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. For information on the dietary specifications, review section 6 of the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#). SFAs should be aware of product nutrition information and limit noncreditable foods. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).



Offer versus serve (OVS): SFAs must offer a minimum of four food items from the three food components, including two grains (or one grain and one meat/meat alternate substitution), one fruit and one milk; or one grain, two fruits, and one milk. The fourth food item cannot be another serving of milk. For a reimbursable meal, students must select at least three items including $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered) and the minimum required serving of at least two other food items. Menu planners may choose to count products with more than 1 oz eq of grains (or meat/meat alternate substitutions) as more than one food item if the additional amount provides the full ounce equivalent. For example, a 2-ounce bagel can credit as two grain items. To count as a food item under OVS, students must take at least the daily minimum required by the meal pattern except for the fruits component, which must be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Amounts less than the minimum serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals](#), and visit the CSDE's OVS webpage.



Offering variety: When SFAs offer a variety of choices with OVS, students must be allowed to decline one of the four offered items. The language used on school menus and signs must indicate if choices are allowed. Use “or” to differentiate between item choices such as “choose one: bagel **or** cereal and graham crackers.” To offer variety, provide different choices and specify the number of items students can select (see examples below).

Fruit variety

Choose 2 fruits **or** 1 fruit and 1 juice

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of peaches
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup strawberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cantaloupe
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of assorted fruit juices

Milk variety

Choose one

- Low-fat milk
- Fat-free milk
- Fat-free chocolate milk
- Fat-free strawberry milk

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Signage and communication: SFAs must identify all foods that are part of reimbursable meals near or at the beginning of all serving lines, and on the serving line near each food component, as applicable. For example, if fruits are offered in ½-cup portions for grades 9-12, the serving line signage must indicate that students can select two choices. To ensure clear communication with students and staff about the SBP meal pattern and OVS, SFAs must post daily breakfast menus in all schools. Menus should clearly communicate all meal choices and what students can select. SFAs must also provide adequate training for school food service staff on the breakfast meal pattern, including how to recognize reimbursable meals with OVS.



Consistency: Menu planners determine how menu items credit toward the SBP meal pattern. Be consistent with serving sizes and crediting of food items. Plan menus so it is easy for students to select reimbursable meals under OVS, and easy for food service staff to identify reimbursable meals at the point of service. For example, if the menu includes meat/meat alternates as grain substitutions, menu planners may choose to count them as a grain item or an extra food. Choose one option and count these foods the same way for all menus.

Resources

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/ComparisonGrainCreditingSNP.pdf>

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/ComparisonMilkRequirementsSNP.pdf>

Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_SNP_Grades_K-12.pdf

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the NSLP, SBP, SSO of the NSLP, ASP of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM07-19.pdf>

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 07-19: Compliance Issues with the Vegetables and Fruits Components for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM07-19.pdf>

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Fruits Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Fruits>

Grains Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Grains>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#MMA>

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE website):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Menu Planning Resources for School Meals (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Milk>

National School Lunch Program (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/National-School-Lunch-Program>

Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/NoncreditableFoodsSNPgradesK-12.pdf>

Nutrition Standards for School Meals (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

School Breakfast Program (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Breakfast-Program>

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Vegetables>

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For more information, review the CSDE's guide, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SBP/MenuPlanningSBPgradesK-12.pdf>.

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